



# City of Seattle

## Seattle Planning Commission

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Kevin McDonald  
Christopher Persons  
Matt Roewe  
Sarah Snider

### **Staff**

Barbara Wilson,  
Executive Director  
  
Katie Sheehy,  
Planning Analyst  
  
Diana Canzoneri,  
Demographer &  
Senior Policy Analyst  
  
Robin Magonegil,  
Administrative Staff  
Assistant

December 13, 2011

Honorable Councilmember Sally J. Clark, Chair  
Committee on the Built Environment  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

### **RE: Final Recommendations on Roosevelt Urban Village Rezone and Development Standards for the High School Blocks**

Dear Councilmember Clark,

The Planning Commission has been tracking actions to better align land use and investments in the Roosevelt light rail station area for many years. First we reviewed and recommended updates for the 2006 Roosevelt neighborhood plan policies that were adopted into Seattle's Comprehensive Plan Urban Village. In 2010, we released *Seattle Transit Communities*, which identified Roosevelt as a high-priority mixed-use neighborhood and recommended actions to maximize the transit investments. This past year, we have closely followed the proposed rezone. We support DPD's proposed rezone (CB 117271) as an advancement of growth management goals by providing an increment of appropriately located density beyond the current zoning. We encourage the Council as a whole to adopt the package as proposed.

### **Development Standards for the High School Blocks**

The Commission has carefully reviewed Options 1-4 as presented by Council Central Staff and we strongly support Option 2 for the following reasons:

In light of the findings in our recently released *Housing Seattle* report, we support taking every opportunity to promote land use policies that will create additional housing options for the future needs of Seattle residents. In Option 2, the 65-foot height allowance will yield approximately 56 affordable units (at 80% AMI) through the incentive zoning program as opposed to zero units that would result from Option 1's 40-foot height limitation.

Given the size and scale of the three blocks in question, five-foot ground level setbacks proposed in Option 2 can help create breathing room at the street level, a positive, human-scaled connection between the buildings and the street, and a measure of privacy and outdoor usable space for adjacent residents. These features make it ideal for multifamily housing. Our *Housing Seattle* report recommends that the City “promote and encourage housing production that addresses gaps in the market for families with children,” especially in areas like Roosevelt where access to high capacity public transit can help make daily living more affordable. However, we would be concerned about the effects of overly excessive setbacks that would potentially limit opportunities to build larger family sized housing units on upper stories.

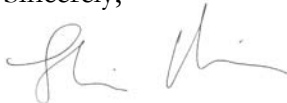
These blocks provide an ideal setting for modest income households with children to locate in a neighborhood with exceptional schools and supportive neighborhood assets, such as public transportation, grocery stores, an established neighborhood business district, and public open spaces. Residents would have walkable access to the transit station, to the high school, and to the parks just to the south. Creating a livable transit community at Roosevelt should maximize these essential neighborhood components.

### **Develop a Streetscape Concept Plan**

We also recommend that DPD and SDOT follow up on the rezone legislation with the development of a Streetscape Concept Plan for the entire Station Area overlay, similar to what was created for the West Seattle Triangle. The plan should clearly articulate how projected land uses are expected to integrate with the public realm, and identify any needs for City investment and resources. Together, the streetscape concept plan and the proposed rezone would help implement the goals and policies of the 2006 neighborhood plan update and set the stage for the light rail station expected to open in 2020. Such a framework could identify key areas for improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, and establish a clear wayfinding system serving the light rail station, bus service, Roosevelt High School, parks, and the business district.

Now is the time to start encouraging this vision to become reality, in advance of the station opening in 2020. Please contact me or our Director, Barbara Wilson at (206) 684-0431 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Leslie Miller, Chair

Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Mayor Mike McGinn  
Seattle City Councilmembers  
Ethan Raup, David Hiller, Rebecca Deehr; Mayor's Office  
Rebecca Herzfeld, Sara Belz; Council Central Staff  
Diane Sugimura, Marshall Foster, John Skelton, Geoffrey Wentlandt; DPD

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL:**

- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is working with the Roosevelt Development Group on a potential development project that may be affected by the proposed rezone. Commissioner Cutler provided technical assistance regarding the impact of setbacks on housing unit size but did not weigh in on the merits of one option over another and abstained from voting on these recommendations.
- Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber Thompson, works on commercial and multifamily projects throughout the city and that she served on the Light Rail Review Panel, which reviews the design of light rail stations in Seattle, including the one within the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Veris Law Group, represents developers of multi-family and single-family projects in Seattle and that he is outside land use counsel to Sound Transit on its Capitol Hill Station project.
- Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on commercial, multifamily, and infrastructure projects throughout the city and that Sound Transit has been a client in the past.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA, is currently providing permitting support for Sound Transit's Roosevelt Station final design, and also provides on-call consulting to Sound Transit that could include future work on a TOD project in the Roosevelt area.
- Commissioner Martin Kaplan disclosed that his firm, Martin Henry Kaplan, Architects AIA, works on projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Bradley Khouri disclosed that his firm, b9 architects inc, works on commercial and multifamily projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation and planning projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that her firm, SvR, works on commercial and multifamily projects throughout the city.
- Commissioner Christopher Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, builds and owns affordable housing throughout the city of Seattle.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that his firm, VIA Architecture, provides design and planning services to transit agencies, the city of Seattle and private sector developers in Seattle.
- Commissioner Sarah Snider disclosed that her firm, LMN Architects, designs commercial and transit-related projects throughout the region.